DAMN INTERESTING

WHO WANTS TO BE A THOUSANDAIRE?

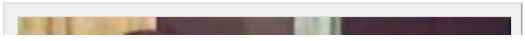
ARTICLE #332 • WRITTEN BY ALAN BELLOWS

On the 19th of May 1984, at CBS Television City in Hollywood, a curious air of tension hung over the studio during the taping of the popular game show *Press Your Luck*. Ordinarily a live studio audience could be counted upon to holler and slap their hands together, but something was keeping them unusually subdued. The object of the audience's awe was sitting at the center podium on the stage, looking rather unremarkable in his thrift-store shirt and slicked-back graying hair. His name was Michael Larson.

"You're going to go again?" asked the show's host Peter Tomarken as Larson gesticulated. Gasps and murmurs punctuated the audience's cautious applause, and the contestants sitting on either side of Larson clapped in stunned silence. "Michael's going *again*," Tomarken announced incredulously. "We've never had anything like this before."

The scoreboard on Larson's podium read "$90,351," an amount unheard of in the history of *Press Your Luck*. In fact, this total was far greater than any person had ever earned in one sitting on any television game show. With each spin on the randomized "Big Board" Larson took a one-in-six chance of hitting a "Whammy" space that would strip him of all his spoils, yet for 36 consecutive spins he had somehow missed the whammies, stretched the show beyond it's 30-minute format, and accumulated extraordinary winnings. Such a streak was astronomically unlikely, but Larson was not yet ready to stop. He was convinced that he knew exactly what he was doing.

Michael Larson was born in the small town of Lebanon, Ohio in 1949. Although he was generally regarded as creative and intelligent, he had an inexplicable preference for shady enterprises over gainful employment. One of his earliest exploits was in middle school, where he smuggled candy bars into class and profitably peddled them on the sly. This innocuous operation was just the first in a decreasingly scrupulous series of ventures. One of his later schemes involved opening a checking account with a bank that was offering a promotional $500 to each new customer; he would withdraw the cash at the earliest opportunity, close the account, then repeat the process over and over under assumed names.



On another occasion he created a fake business

Michael Larson and Teresa Dinwitty on vinyl.

under a family member's name, hired himself as an employee, then laid himself off to collect unemployment wages .

By 1983 Michael Larson had been married and divorced twice and was living with his girlfriend Teresa Dinwitty. During the summers he operated a Mister Softee ice cream truck, and during the off-season he passed the time poring through piles of periodicals in search of money-making schemes. Michael also spent much of the day with his console television, scanning the airwaves for lucrative opportunities. One day it occurred to him that he could double his information intake by setting a second console TV to beside the first and tuning it to a different channel. Soon he procured a third. Eventually he added a row of smaller televisions atop the three consoles, and yet another row of tubes was later stacked atop that. Now he could watch 12 channels at once.

The warm, buzzing television tumor metastasized into adjacent rooms, filling the house with a goulash of infomercials, news programs, game shows, and advertisements for money-making schemes. Larson watched them in a trance-like state, sometimes throughout the night. Dinwitty would later say of her boyfriend and common-law husband, "He always thought he was smarter than everybody else," and that he had a "constant yearning for knowledge." But when visitors asked about the chattering mass of receivers she found it easier to just tell them that Michael was crazy.

One fateful November day in 1983, Peter Tomarken's dapper countenance appeared on one of Michael's many monitors. Tomarken was the host of a new game show called *Press Your Luck* which was giving away more money than any other game shows at the time. What most interested Michael was the game's "Big Board," an electronic array of prize boxes which operated by lighting up squares in a rapid and random fashion until the player pressed a big red button to stop the action. The player's randomly selected box might contain a vacation, a prize, cash rewards, and/or extra spins. But with each spin there was also a one-in-six chance of hitting a Whammy which would cause an animated character to appear on the screen and expunge all of a player's winnings.

Michael's secret safe spots are the ones that contain $3000 and $2000 prizes at the time this picture was taken.

Larson invested in a newfangled video cassette recorder and began taping episodes of *Press Your Luck*. After weeks of painstaking scrutiny Michael realized that the bouncing prize selector did not actually move randomly; it always followed one of five lengthy sequences. This information was only moderately useful due to the rapidly shuffling positions of the prizes and penalties, but his methodical analysis led to another finding. Of the eighteen squares on the Big Board there were two that never had Whammies: #4 and #8. This meant that all a player must do to avoid Whammies--and thus retain his hundreds of dollars in winnings--would be to memorize five interminable series of numbers and develop superhuman reflexes. Giddy with the thrill of discovery, Larson began fine-tuning his timing using his VCR's pause key as a surrogate big red button.

Six months later, in May 1984, Michael Larson sat beardily in the interview room for the *Press Your Luck* auditions in Hollywood. His story left few heartstrings unpulled: He explained that he was an unemployed ice cream truck driver. He had borrowed the bus money to get to Hollywood from Ohio because he loved *Press Your Luck*. He had stopped at a thrift store down the street to buy a 65

cent dress shirt. And he was unable to afford a gift for his six-year-old daughter's upcoming birthday. Executive producer Bill Carruthers said of Larson's audition, "He really impressed us. He had charisma." Contestant coordinator Bob Edwards was uneasy about Larson, but he couldn't quite articulate why, so Bill overruled him. "I should have listened to Bob," Carruthers later chuckled.

Taping occurred the following Saturday. Returning champion Ed Long sat on Michael's right and contestant Janie Litras sat on his left. Host Peter Tomarken made boilerplate game-showey chit-chat with each contestant, and he asked Michael about his ice cream truck. "You've kind of OD'd on ice cream, right?" he asked Larson, who agreed. "Well hopefully you won't OD on money, Michael."

Michael earned 3 spins on the Big Board in the first question round, giving him 3 opportunities to test the skills he had cultivated over the past six months. The board's incandescent selector began its distinctive pseudo-random maneuvers. "Come on...big bucks," Michael chanted, as was customary for players when up against the Big Board. "STOP!" he shouted as he slapped the button with both hands. The selector was stopped on a Whammy in slot #17. Michael shook his head and forced an embarrassed smile, but now he knew exactly how the board was timed with respect to the button. With his second and third spins Michael found his stride. He dropped all pretenses and remained silent as he concentrated on the light bouncing around the big board. Both times he successfully landed on space #4, and he ended the first half of the game with $2,500.

In the second and more lucrative half of the game, Michael managed to acquire seven spins to use on the big board. Since he was in last place he was the first to spin. He positioned his hands over the button with interlocked fingers and impatiently interrupted the host's banter by shouting, "I'm ready, I'm ready!" Tomarken indulged him, and the light on the big board began bouncing. Again, Larson was silent as he frowned at the board. Fellow contestant Ed Long would later say of Larson during these moments that "he went into a trance."

Thus began Larson's inconceivable procession of winning spins. His demeanor alternated between intense concentration and jubilation. The strategy worked even better than he had anticipated due to the large number of Free Spin bonuses that appeared in his safe slots. Host Peter Tomarken became increasingly flabbergasted each time Larson made the "spin again" gesture. $30,000 was considered an extraordinary payoff for one day on any game show at that time, and the likelihood of missing the whammies for more than a dozen spins was considered to be vanishingly small. By his 13th spin Michael had $32,351 and nervous giggles. By his 21st spin he had $47,601 and conspicuous anxiety. But he pressed on.

The *Press Your Luck* control booth had grown silent as the show's producers began to realize that Larson was consistently winning on the same two spaces. In a panic, the booth operators called Michael Brockman, CBS's head of daytime programming. "Something was very wrong," Brockman said in a *TV Guide* interview. "Here was this guy from nowhere, and he was hitting the bonus box every time. It was bedlam, I can tell you." Producers asked if they should stop the show, but Larson did not appear to be breaking any rules so they were forced to allow the episode to play out.

Back on the stage, Ed and Janie clapped incredulously on either side of Michael, still waiting for their turns on the board. Janie let slip a snort of disgust after Michael's 26th successful spin. Tomarken covered his face with his hand in disbelief as Larson risked almost $75k on his 32nd spin. But Michael's zen-like concentration was beginning to falter. He paused to set his head on the

podium and let out a whimper of exhaustion. Still he motioned to continue. The studio audience worried that he'd hit a whammy and experience an unfortunate reversal of fortune, while the producers in the control booth worried that he wouldn't.

On his 40th spin Larson's scoreboard debt-clocked his dollar sign to make room for another digit; he surpassed $100,000. Larson, his shoulders slumped, passed his remaining spins to the bewildered Ed Long. Ed immediately hit a whammy.

Host Peter Tomarken failing to believe what he is seeing.

Michael sat in a twitchy daze as Ed and Janie went through their much more pedestrian turns at the board. But Larson was snapped back to reality when Janie passed 3 of her spins to him. According to the game rules he was obligated to use them. He did not appear pleased.

"I didn't want them," Larson joked nervously as the light began bouncing around the big board, yet almost immediately he punched the big red button and landed on $4,000 in slot #4. Janie let out a squeal. The board started again. After a longer than usual delay, Larson hit the button again, landing safely in slot #8. He had just one mandatory spin remaining. The board started flashing, and Larson let out a sigh. "STOP!" he shouted as he slapped the button, but he had pressed it a fraction of a second too soon. Slot #17 was lit, the same slot where he'd hit a whammy on his first spin. As luck would have it, however, the slot contained a trip to the Bahamas. It was over; Michael had won. Larson gave Ed an awkward embrace and offered Janie a firm handshake. In total, Larson won $110,237 in cash and prizes, including two tropical vacations and a sailboat. Reportedly this was more than triple the previous record for winnings in a single episode of a game show.

A clearly discombobulated Peter Tomarken engaged Larson in an impromptu interview after the show. "Why did you keep going?" he asked.

"Well, two things:" Michael replied. "One, it felt right. And second, I still had seven spins and if I passed them, somebody could have done what I did."

Tomarken was too polite to remark on the ridiculousness of that suggestion. "What are you going to do with the money, Michael?"

"Invest in houses."

Larson was not allowed to return as champion since he had surpassed CBS's $25k winnings limit. As all of the perplexed parties parted ways, CBS executives were called to a meeting to dissect the episode frame-by-frame. In spite of their efforts they could find no evidence of wrongdoing or rule-breaking, so after a few weeks they grudgingly mailed Larson his check. Some people at CBS didn't want the over-extended episode to be released to the public at all, but it was ultimately decided to air it in June as an awkwardly edited two-parter.

Executives insisted that the episode never be seen again. In the meantime *Press Your Luck* paid to add some more sequences to the Big Board to prevent future contestants from mimicking Michael's strategy.

Upon his return home, neighbors were shocked to learn of "crazy" Michael Larson's accomplishment. True to his word, he regaled

his daughter with expensive birthday gifts and invested some of his spoils in real estate. But his fondness for dicey get-rich-quick deals ensnared him in a Ponzi scheme, and he lost enough money to lose his appetite for houses.

Some months later Michael Larson saw another opportunity to stack the odds in his favor with a dash of ingenuity. He walked into his bank one day and asked to withdraw his entire account balance, but with an unusual stipulation: He wanted as much of the cash as possible in one dollar notes. The bank complied with his unorthodox request, and from there he proceeded to another bank to trade even more of his savings for singles. Over a two week period he converted the $100,000 or so that remained of his personal savings into 100,000 one dollar bills.

The motivation for this aberrant behavior was a contest put on by a local radio station. Each day a disk jockey would read a serial number aloud on the air, and if any listener was able to produce the matching dollar bill they would win $30,000. Michael reasoned that 100,000 one dollar bills was 100,000 opportunities to win the prize, giving him a statistical advantage. And even if his scheme proved fruitless he would just redeposit his money, so he figured he had nothing to lose.

Michael and Teresa spent each day rifling through piles of cash looking for matches, pausing only for such distractions as eating, bathing, and excreting. They soon realized that it was impossible for two people to examine that much money in the allotted time, so Michael redeposited a portion of it. After a few weeks, Michael's obsession over the contest began to put considerable strain on his relationship with Teresa, and on his relationship with reality. The cash was stashed in kitchen drawers, up the stairs, and on bedroom floors. They kept the bills in burlap sacks, grocery bags, and unkempt stacks. And though his girlfriend would scream and shout, he simply would not take the cash bags out.

One evening, seeking refuge from the endless hours of cash-collating, Michael and Teresa accepted an invitation to attend a Christmas party. When they returned home at about 1:00 am, they found the back door of the house had been brutalized. Apparently the pair had unwittingly left a sizable tip for an unsolicited cleaning service: about $50,000. According to Dinwitty, Michael immediately accused her of being an accessory to the heist. She denied involvement, and police found no evidence of her guilt, but she says that Larson was never convinced. She claimed that Michael would stand and stare at her while she slept, which made her fear for her safety. One day while Michael was away she took $5,000 that he had hidden in a dresser drawer and absconded with the kids. She called him from a hotel to tell him to move out of her house. His only response was, "I want my money back." He packed his belongings and departed, leaving one wall of the living room blemished and peeling from the heat of his once-formidable tower of televisions.

Police never identified the thieves. In 1994, about 10 years after his pivotal *Press Your Luck* appearance, Larson was invited to be a guest on ABC's *Good Morning America* to discuss the movie *Quiz Show*. With a raspy voice he unbeardily reminisced about his game show exploits and expressed regret that he was never able to play on Jeopardy, because, he explained, "I think I have figured out some angles on that." Around that same time he was also interviewed by *TV Guide* magazine. When asked about the whereabouts of his *Press Your Luck* winnings, he replied, "It didn't work out. We had a cash-flow problem, and I lost everything."

In March of the following year, Michael fled from Ohio with agents from the SEC, IRS, and FBI hot on his heels. He was implicated as one of the architects of a cash-flow solution that operated under the name Pleasure Time Incorporated. It was a pyramid scam selling shares in a fraudulent

"American Indian Lottery" which had hoodwinked 20,000 investors out of 3 million dollars. The Pleasure Time flimflam was historic in that it was the first time the SEC pursued a case where the bulk of the fraud took place in newfangled "cyberspace." Michael Larson was a fugitive from justice for four years until 1999, when he turned up in Apopka, Florida. He had succumbed to throat cancer.

Mchael Larson's appearance on *Good Morning America*

Michael Larson held the record for the most game-show winnings in a single day until 2006, when it was broken by Vickyann Chrobak-Sadowski on The Price is Right. Larson's handiwork on *Press Your Luck* was sufficiently extraordinary that he has become a strange kind of folk hero to some. Others regard him as a cheap huckster or a likable-but-occasionally-creepy crackpot. The real Michael Larson was arguably an amalgam of these qualities. His shenanigans on *Press Your Luck* are oft described as a "scam," "scandal," or a "cheat," but even the CBS executives ultimately admitted that he had broken nary a rule. In the end, his impressive performance on *Press Your Luck* may be one of the only honest day's work that Michael Larson ever did.

Written by Alan Bellows, posted on 12 September 2011. Alan is the founder/designer/head writer/managing editor of Damn Interesting.

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FURTHER READING:

- The infamous episode of *Press Your Luck*
- *Big Bucks: The Press Your Luck Scandal* by GSN
- *This American Life* episode about Michael Larson
- NY Times archive article about Pleasure Time, Inc.
- Purchase Shel Silverstein's *Every Thing On It* on Amazon

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OLDER It's About Damn Time
home
rand
NEWER Rider on the Storm

RESPONSE AREA

74 COMMENTS SINCE A MAJOR ACCIDENT

LPDad It's a MIRACLE !!

Welcome Back.

Posted 12 September 2011 at 09:48 am • reply

igmothemagus

It's ALIVE!!!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 09:54 am • reply

jedat

Damn I've missed this, welcome back Alan you've been missed.

Is it too soon to say i miss the bannana though?

Posted 12 September 2011 at 10:12 am • reply

Rush

I Bellow a welcome back!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 10:34 am • reply

phoxes

Great to have you back! Servers must be taking a beating right now ;-)

Posted 12 September 2011 at 10:48 am • reply

Spike

What a great way to start the week. Welcome back, Alan. A big ol' slice of pie with ice cream on top for you!!!!

Great article, too. Damn interesting!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 10:59 am • reply

Flammadeao

Whoo hooo! I'd like to welcome the new author. It's god to have them :)

Posted 12 September 2011 at 11:29 am • reply

Flammadeao

> *Flammadeao said: "Whoo hooo! I'd like to welcome the new author. It's god to have them :)"*

Also good as well.

Posted 12 September 2011 at 11:30 am • reply

lostindustrial

Very well written Alan! Damn Interesting!
Glad to have you back.

Posted 12 September 2011 at 11:38 am • reply

nonsequitur

Is a new Alan or did your ROBO-sapien AB II finally take over? Either way, WELCOME

BACK DI!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 11:48 am • reply

ricevillage

Your next trick, if you decide to accept it, is to post a story about something before it happens, and before you write it. The real problem: You'll still get the standard 958,505 comments within 4.6 nanoseconds of posting it.

Posted 12 September 2011 at 11:57 am • reply

Asuyuka

Welcome back! XD I missed this site so much!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 11:57 am • reply

Mo

Welcome back! You were missed :D

Posted 12 September 2011 at 12:09 pm • reply

zippyy

From a very long time reader ... THANK YOU

Posted 12 September 2011 at 12:59 pm • reply

Kowalski5233

WB!! Missed you guys, checked frequently for a return and glad I found one at long last!! And that with yet another great article. May I dare say, keep it up!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 01:13 pm • reply

RogerG

cautiously optimistic about new articles becoming a regular feature of DI again... thanks :-)

Posted 12 September 2011 at 02:01 pm • reply

darren.l

My patient wait for the enlightenment process to begin again has been rewarded at last.

Thank you Alan, and welcome back!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 02:41 pm • reply

aacdcorp

I believe Bill Murray was to have made a movie about this guy but the project never came to fruition. Sad - like you having been gone so long but welcome back!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 03:11 pm • reply

Frank G

Great layout how the site looks now Alan.
Way easier to find the articles, good luck with the restart.

Posted 12 September 2011 at 09:04 pm • reply

tunapez

Bravo! DI!

Thanks.

Posted 12 September 2011 at 09:09 pm • reply

xpresident

Great article! Took me back to the days I used to read 10-20 damn interesting articles everyday. Looking forward to a lot more!

Posted 12 September 2011 at 09:55 pm • reply

madguy000

Reader from India. I registered just to tell you that i had you on my rss just HOPING you will be back.

Posted 12 September 2011 at 11:56 pm • reply

Lisette DI is back! Yayyy…

Posted 13 September 2011 at 12:16 am • reply

surfjay When the countdown post went up, I actually FELT it. I hadn't been here for about a year, but suddenly had the urge to check for a new post.

Thank you so much for the new article. Damn interesting it was.

Posted 13 September 2011 at 02:01 am • reply

Griff is it just me, or is this a rewrite of an old Damn Interesting article? I may have read about it on a different site, but I'm not sure…

anyway it's fantastic to have you back Damn Interesting! I had pretty much written this site off for a while, but something told me that it would get resurrected eventually

just don't let it be another two years till the next article ok? I expect you guys to start posting articles pretty frequently to make up

Posted 13 September 2011 at 06:15 am • reply

Griff also, it kinda figures that this guy would lose all his money, you just KNOW Karma is gonna screw you over when you do something this outrageous

Posted 13 September 2011 at 06:17 am • reply

Cherubrokker

YAY DI returns! Thanks for the terrific article.

Posted 13 September 2011 at 06:56 am • reply

Raketemensch

Welcome back, Alan! Can't wait to read your updates!

Posted 13 September 2011 at 08:45 am • reply

ssssssspoon

Well Done Alan. Welcome back and the site looks great, as usual. Time for pie.

Posted 13 September 2011 at 09:12 am • reply

lostindustrial

Is it just me or does the older version of Michael kinda look like Tim Robbins?

Posted 13 September 2011 at 09:47 am • reply

Stead311

I think his huckster like attitude really put a damper on what otherwise would have been a really friendly money grubbing calculist.

Posted 13 September 2011 at 10:09 am • reply

Falos

I gotta say, that TV array sounds pretty badass. He probably wasn't watching them simultaneously, but it seems it was all infomercials and other filler content, not action movies, easy enough to juggle.

Posted 13 September 2011 at 10:52 am • reply

j0etb

Welcome back Alan! Glad to see you back in play, hope everything's sorting itself out for you. Great article, fascinating and well written - an apt return to form!

Posted 13 September 2011 at 11:29 am • reply

Caffiend

So glad to see new content on one of my favorite websites! Thanks for the excellent article Alan. Love your book. Damn Interesting is back!

Posted 13 September 2011 at 04:13 pm • reply

NinjaGambleYen

At last! Great article. Welcome back.

Posted 13 September 2011 at 11:09 pm • reply

FrankLee

Great article. I'm glad you guys are back. been a lurker for ages :)

Posted 14 September 2011 at 12:37 am • reply

Stead311

Damn you gravatar!

Posted 14 September 2011 at 05:50 am • reply

1c3d0g

Woah! That is incredible!

Posted 14 September 2011 at 06:48 pm • reply

xoxoxoBruce

Welcome back buddy, we've missed you.

Posted 14 September 2011 at 06:50 pm • reply

Our Jo

Welcome back :)

I laughed and thought "0wned" to the gameshows.. I feel kinda sad it all went bad in the end. This guy invested so much of his life into making an easy dollar.. I have to wonder what his net worth would be had he invested his time in a legitemate practice. Also, very creepy standing over the wife while shes asleep.. no wonder she raided the sock drawer and got the hell out of there lol

Posted 15 September 2011 at 12:54 am • reply

Anonymousx2

Is it just my warped imagination, or Larson resemble either Wolverine or the Wolfman?

(I know that's not an intellectual post. I'm just not up to such things today.)

Posted 16 September 2011 at 06:00 pm • reply

little fishy

I find it amazing the lengths some will go to in order to make an "easy" buck!

I especially enjoyed the Seuss-ish description of the money stacks...

"The cash was stashed in kitchen drawers, up the stairs, and on bedroom floors. They kept the bills in burlap sacks, grocery bags, and unkempt stacks. And though his girlfriend would scream and shout, he simply would not take the cash bags out."

I have been a lurker for many years and am so excited to have you back that I finally came out of the shadows. Hope to see more great articles soon!

Posted 17 September 2011 at 09:10 am • reply

Anonymousx2

> *little fishy said: "Hope to see more great articles soon!"*

My broken record: I want to be able to purchase a new book.

Posted 18 September 2011 at 05:42 am • reply

blore I should email this to Mr. Bellows, but first I'll post here instead, in case anyone else can corroborate:

Sometimes when I visit DI, the web server may report an error of type 503, 'Service Temporarily Unavailable.' I haven't paid enough attention to be able to tell exactly how frequently this happens, but I have occasionally noticed such errors.

It's no problem to simply reload the page; the occasional errors are just an annoyance. Not sure what might be causing them, perhaps the web hosting company's tech support can investigate the error logs?

(As a first guess, perhaps allocating more memory to PHP might possibly help? If that's not it, perhaps some other configuration issue? Or a faulty plugin somewhere? Or...???) .__.

Posted 20 September 2011 at 04:15 am • reply

drewski_brewski

> *little fishy said: "I find it amazing the lengths some will go to in order to make an "easy" buck!*
>
> *I especially enjoyed the Seuss-ish description of the money stacks…*
> *"The cash was stashed in kitchen drawers, up the stairs, and on bedroom floors.*
> *They kept the bills in burlap sacks, grocery bags, and unkempt stacks. And though*
> *his girlfriend would scream and shout, he simply would not take the cash bags out."*
> *I have been a lurker for many years and am so excited to have you back that I*
> *finally came out of the shadows. Hope to see more great articles soon!"*

That's a reference to a Shel Silverstein peom, "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out" It's fun, Google it.

Posted 20 September 2011 at 09:39 am • reply

Ard Ri I almost fell out of my chair when I checked the site...great to see it back online!!!!

Posted 20 September 2011 at 12:30 pm • reply

odin I do not usually bother registering and commenting on sites. I thoroughly enjoyed this article! Thank you very much for writing it.

Posted 21 September 2011 at 06:32 pm • reply

Hoekstes

I wonder how long until the entire comment gang pitches up again, and the pie.

Posted 22 September 2011 at 07:10 am • reply

Arwen OH HAPPY DAY! I thought you would never be back!

Posted 23 September 2011 at 11:10 am • reply

cronic5

Wow...How great. Over two years of no posts, only to have this lame one posted. And even after 12 days, not another one. Damn Interesting is hardly "back". More like it sighed heavily while in a coma. Really, this is it? How disappointing.

Posted 25 September 2011 at 05:54 am • reply

BalognaBoy

> *cronic5 said: "Wow…How great. Over two years of no posts, only to have this lame one posted. And even after 12 days, not another one. Damn Interesting is hardly "back". More like it sighed heavily while in a coma. Really, this is it? How disappointing."*

Researching and writing take time, and you're enjoying the fruits of the authors' labor for free. Yet you come here and throw your little whiny tantrum because they don't give you enough for your liking. I'll wager that you contribute very little to the world. You just moan about other people not cramming enough stuff into the great, insatiable belly that is your sense of entitlement.

Posted 25 September 2011 at 11:27 am • reply

Alan Bellows

> *cronic5 said: "Over two years of no posts, only to have this lame one posted. And even after 12 days, not another one. Damn Interesting is hardly "back". More like it sighed heavily while in a coma. Really, this is it? How disappointing."*

I am reluctant to dignify your unpleasant remarks with a personal reply, but I'd like to point out that Damn Interesting has no posting schedule, as indicated on our About Us page. Nor did we have a schedule before our hiatus began. Our next few articles are in progress, and we'll publish each one when it's ready.

We all have full-time jobs, significant others, and responsibilities. We write when we can find time because it's a rewarding diversion.

Posted 25 September 2011 at 02:36 pm • reply

battiesthippo

The hell with the haters, I'm glad Damn Interesting is back, Thanks Alan. I've enjoyed your site and book for years and at the certain risk of redundancy, thanks.

Posted 25 September 2011 at 05:24 pm • reply

NMERCURY

Wow !, I'd just about given up hope on DI along time ago, Don't know what made me think to check back in, but I did... So happy not to see unfortunate Banana's

again. Welcome back Alan !

Posted 25 September 2011 at 07:11 pm • reply

neill1973

Glad that you are back and once again Damn Interesting. I hope to read more soon.

Posted 26 September 2011 at 10:32 am • reply

Jujuman

Dear, dear, dear Alan. Welcome back to your manifest destiny of raising the average IQ of cyber-space. Another informative, incisive, dazzlingly brilliant article, I shouldn't wonder. I shall now settle down to read it.

Posted 26 September 2011 at 10:39 am • reply

blazemaguire

Long time lurker on this website, but thought it appropriate to add my 'thanks' to the writer(s).... particularly at a time when others are showing a polar oposite of 'thanks'.

You know a website is good when you start telling storys down the pub and invariably they start with "their was this article on damninteresting.com" .... i'm also a teacher by day (engineering/design technology) and i'll randomly get on the subject of one of the engineering topics on here (like the flywheel powered tram, or dymaxion car, or space elevator, or world 2.0).... everynight I check the random articles for one I might have missed!

So many inspiring stories.... - just wanted to say thanks really!

Posted 26 September 2011 at 11:49 am • reply

Stead311

I wonder if I should resubmit my piece on Solipsism. I worked hard on that one.

Posted 27 September 2011 at 04:45 am • reply

Silverhill

But if you're a true solipsist, you won't be able to tell if there is anyone else who reads your article! ;-)

Posted 27 September 2011 at 02:50 pm • reply

Ron

Interesting article! Reminds me of an 80's movie where a kid rigs a mail order contest by sending in unlimited entries because they forgot to include the disclaimer "limit one per household". Free cookie for anyone who can remember the name of the damn movie cause I just spent a half hour Googling it and came up blank.

Posted 27 September 2011 at 09:10 pm • reply

Kejawa

Rigging the mail order conest...

That sounds like Mr. Laslo Hollyfeld aka "King of the steam tunnels" from Real Genius. He wasn't a kid but he did get 32.4 % of the prizes including the RV. Oh yeah, don't forget the sexy blonde.

Moles and trolls, moles and trolls, work work work…

Posted 28 September 2011 at 07:31 am • reply

Ron Well played sir! I need to rent that one, ol Val Kilmer's starting point I believe.

Posted 28 September 2011 at 08:55 pm • reply

Groad Jon Gries AKA "Laslo" was also notable as Uncle Rico in Napoleon Dynamite and as Benjamin Linus' dad in Lost.

Posted 03 October 2011 at 01:41 pm • reply

sid I think Top Secret! came before Real Genius, as far as Kilmer's first role.

Posted 04 October 2011 at 12:20 pm • reply

FixitDave

Welcome back DI, looking forward to many new articles by the team.

Posted 05 October 2011 at 02:22 pm • reply

TheStink

Damn awesome article. Great to see you guys back again!

Posted 05 October 2011 at 10:55 pm • reply

rev.felix

He should have bought a chain of bakeries with his winnings. Then he could get free pie whenever he wanted.

Also WOO DI IS BACK!

Posted 06 October 2011 at 02:43 pm • reply

Wing-nut

"He packed his belongings and departed, leaving one wall of the living room blemished and peeling from the heat of his once-formidable tower of televisions."

Excellent writing. So glad you're back.

Posted 13 October 2011 at 02:14 pm • reply

damnG

I second Wing-nut.

I thought my favorite site for interesting articles was fading away.

Damninteresting rules, damnit!

Posted 24 October 2011 at 03:39 am • reply

Someone Is Interested

Hey Guys,
WELCOME BACK! :)
Your efforts and beautiful stories are embedded in our memories forever! So take all the time you need....

Here's a link on youtube if you wanted to see the episode in action ;D

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_EjKKGSXus

Posted 02 November 2011 at 02:02 pm • reply

Denvergal

I had quit looking at this website for so long for fear of seeing that damn banana mocking me, but am so pleasantly surprised to find you are back and there is still some damn interesting things to write/read about!! So glad you're back, my lunch break at work has meaning again!!

Posted 27 December 2011 at 12:43 pm • reply

Flippant

Wow.. in that first pic he bears a striking resemblance to Kyle Sandilands - an Australian TV/radio "personality" [read: wanker]. Lol I think it's those beady, shifty eyes.. spitting image of each other.

Posted 12 January 2012 at 08:31 am • reply

J.K. Damn interesting article for a damned long time coming resurrection to a really damn fine site. Thanks!

I remember this actually on tv as I was like 7 at the time and loved those goofy little red whammies and adults having cows over losing the big money on the board. I just recall it vaguely but it was cool seeing this weird dude never miss at going around while the host looked like he was going to blow from the shock of it all.

Posted 01 February 2012 at 01:45 pm • reply

Tim I remember watching the second part of this when I got home from school. People in class were talking about it like it a lot and I had to see how it turned out. Found out how he did it much later in life, found him very clever and I had no problem with what he did for the game cause I could, I would have done the same thing.

Posted 20 May 2013 at 12:34 pm • reply

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